

NEWS RELEASE

DELAWARE DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTION

Commissioner Claire DeMatteis

Presented by Jason P. Miller, Chief of Communications and Community Relations

245 McKee Road | Dover, DE 19904 | Office: 302.857.5232 | jason.miller@delaware.gov

22 new Correctional Officers take up their posts as the latest DOC training academy graduates

Dover, DE – On Friday, March 27, 22 Correctional Officer cadets graduated from the 236th Correctional Employee Initial Training (CEIT) Class and took their oaths of office as Delaware's newest law enforcement officers. Cadets completed an intensive three-month program of classroom and hands-on instruction in multiple subject areas, including inmate supervision, defensive tactics, emergency preparedness, weapons and chemical munitions, report writing, behavioral health training, CPR/Basic First Aid, and inter-personal communication skills.

CEIT graduations are normally celebrated before an audience of hundreds of family members, friends, and Department of Correction leadership and staff. In support of the COVID-19 restrictions on gatherings, Friday's ceremony was attended only by the graduates and a small number of DOC leaders and training academy staff. All participants kept to safe social distancing guidelines, while hundreds of family, friends and colleagues participated instead by watching the event through an online video livestream.

"We already know you have the grit to handle what it takes to be a correctional officer," **Department of Correction Commissioner Claire DeMatteis told the cadets.** "You persevered head-on through a health pandemic during the final weeks of your training, and you said, 'count me in'. You are prepared to help secure DOC's correctional facilities in the midst of the most severe health crisis of the past 100 years, and by your stoic presence today you are saying once again, 'count me in'. As challenging as this is, you will be tested further in your career. It is the nature of the jobs as law enforcement officers. You have the training, skills and life experiences to carry out our dual mission of public safety and offender rehabilitation."

Thanks to the leadership of Governor Carney and strong support from members of the General Assembly, and in partnership with the Correctional Officers Association of Delaware, the DOC has taken measures to improve officer recruitment and retention, including increasing correctional officer salaries, establishing a career ladder for correctional officers, enhancing promotional opportunities and employing strategies to reduce forced overtime shifts. Most recently, in 2020 the DOC established an officer wellness initiative in partnership with the University of Delaware to support officer well-being. Through these efforts, over the past 24 months the Department of Correction has reduced its Correctional Officer vacancy rate by more than half. Friday's graduation was the second Correctional Officer academy class to graduate in 2020.

Watch a video recording of the CEIT 236 graduation ceremony online at www.facebook.com/decorrection.

Cadet Elijah Jolly served as Class Speaker and Cadet Zane Garand was selected by academy instructional staff as Outstanding Cadet.

The instructional team for CEIT Class 236 consisted of Primary Instructor Craig Brumbaugh, Instructor Brian E. Lewis and Drill Instructors Latanya Smith and Tyler Wilton.

The graduates begin their new careers with the Delaware Department of Correction this coming week. A photo of CEIT Class 236 is attached.

-END-

